



ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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A report on the process used to reduce the extensive list of twenty (26) options identified in Phase I of the Danbury Branch Feasibility Study to the eight (8) most viable alternatives was prepared at the end of Phase I. This section presents the report's executive summary.

The eight alternatives identified for further evaluation by the Study Committee, Connecticut DOT and the public were:

Alternative One – No Build.

Alternative Two – Extend Existing Service to New Milford Using Existing Trackage and Equipment.

Alternative Three – Electrify Danbury Branch from South Norwalk to Danbury using Existing Equipment.

Alternative Four – Enhance Passing Sidings from South Norwalk to Danbury.

Alternative Five – Electrify and Enhance Passing Sidings from South Norwalk to Danbury.

Alternative Six – Extend Existing Service to New Milford with Alignment Improvements between Danbury and New Milford.

Alternative Seven – Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) Option to Electrify to Wilton and Establish Feeder Bus/Rail Service North.

Alternative Eight – Full Build.

Executive Summary – Alternatives Summary Evaluation Report

The primary objective of this Alternatives Summary Evaluation report is to reduce the extensive list of options identified in Phase I of the Danbury Branch Feasibility Study to those most viable alternatives that warrant further consideration in Phase II.

This report provides an assessment of the 26 options that were presented in Task 2 and Task 4 of the Phase I study. This covers two segments of the Danbury Branch corridor: South Norwalk to Danbury and Danbury to New Milford. The options considered for each segment have been screened against six assessment factors to determine whether or not they should be given further consideration. These factors include:

1. Operational Impact
2. Environmental Impact
3. Fleet Impact
4. Travel Demand
5. Time Savings
6. Financial Impact

A number of options have been eliminated from further review based on identified impacts they have on the above factors. A second tier evaluation was then initiated with the objective of establishing a final list of preferred alternatives for further study in Phase II. The first step in this process was to consolidate the improvement options into eight viable alternatives, using the same assessment factors identified above.

The eight alternatives identified for further evaluation by the Study Advisory Committee, Connecticut DOT and the public are:

Alternative One – No Build. Assumes no major new investments in the Danbury Branch Corridor other than what has already been approved or required for regular maintenance. This Alternative is required as part of the NEPA process. Also, include in Phase II investigation for skip-stop or express service to reduce trip times for some peak trains. **Benefits:** No new expenditures required; ridership will continue to grow.

Alternative Two – Extend Existing Service to New Milford Using Existing Trackage and Equipment. Extends service 13.7 miles from Danbury north along the Housatonic Railroad's freight line to New Milford. Adds stops at Danbury North, Brookfield and New Milford. **Benefits:** Ridership Increase; relatively low cost improvement.

Alternative Three – Electrify Danbury Branch From South Norwalk to Danbury Using Existing Equipment. Installs a new electrification system between South Norwalk and Danbury on the existing single track alignment. **Benefits:** Improves travel time by nine minutes.

Alternative Four – Enhance Passing Sidings From South Norwalk to Danbury. Installs short and long passing sidings along existing track. **Benefits:** Provides bi-directional service and greater flexibility.

Alternative Five – Electrify and Enhance Passing Sidings From South Norwalk to Danbury. Combines Alternative Three and Four. **Benefits:** Provides both travel time improvements and bi-directional service flexibility.

Alternative Six – Extend Existing Service to New Milford With Alignment Improvements between Danbury and New Milford. Similar to Alternative Two but increases track speed to 50 MPH on the New Milford extension. **Benefits:** Improves travel times and stimulates ridership increase.

Alternative Seven – Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) Option to Electrify to Wilton and Establish Feeder Bus/Rail Service to the North. Installs partial electrification of the Branch to Wilton. Investigation of service impacts are required in Phase II. **Benefits:** Improves travel time on a portion of the branch and allows for lower cost feeder service.

Alternative Eight – Full Build. Implements extension of service to New Milford, utilizing Green Alignments, Double Tracking and Electrification the full length of the study corridor route (So. Norwalk to New Milford). At advisory committee meeting(s), State Representatives have suggested that a highest cost alternative be carried throughout this study. **Benefits:** Improved travel times, service flexibility and maximum increase in ridership.

The next step: A discussion and evaluation of these alternatives will be undertaken by Connecticut DOT, the Study Advisory Committee and the public to determine which ones merit further study in Phase II. This will be accomplished through the continuing public involvement process that has steered the course of this study and will be continued through Phase II.